

Information regarding Coronavirus (COVID-19 or 2019-nCoV) and individuals with Substance Use Disorders¹

- Individuals that suffer from Substance Use Disorder are potentially at a higher risk of contracting COVID-19.
- Individuals with Substance Use Disorder are also likely to have a greater risk of complications associated with the virus.
- Substances such as opioids, methamphetamine, and alcohol in large quantities, can suppress respiratory function, restrict blood vessels, and aggravate respiratory distress respectively.
- Smoking and/or vaping illicit substances can further increase the risk of respiratory distress.
- Individuals suffering from substance use issues, who have contracted COVID-19, are at a greater risk of overdose.
 - Due to the respiratory complications caused by the virus, life-saving measures such as CPR or the administration of naloxone may not be as effective if not done in a timely manner.
- Limited access to health care places individuals with Substance Use Disorder at greater risk for many illnesses, and if hospitals and clinics are at their capacity, these individuals—who already face stigma and often overlooked by the healthcare system—may experience greater barriers to treatment for COVID-19.
- Self-quarantining, social distancing, and other public health measures may disrupt access to naloxone, syringes, fentanyl testing strips, medications, and other support needed by people with Substance Use Disorders, including treatment and prevention resources.

¹ See National Institute on Drug Abuse (March 12, 2020): <https://www.drugabuse.gov/about-nida/noras-blog/2020/03/covid-19-potential-implications-individuals-substance-use-disorders> (Accessed on March 20, 2020). Also, please contact New Jersey State Police's Drug Monitoring Initiative for more information.